

performing, on the server appliance, an act pertaining to the context management action;
and
sending, from the server appliance, via the network, a second network message, in
accordance with the network communication protocol, containing information pertaining to the
context management action.

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13. (NEW) The method of claim 12, wherein performing the act pertaining to context management comprises performing a processing function in a context manager implemented on the server appliance.

14. (NEW) The method of claim 12, wherein performing the act pertaining to context management comprises performing a processing function in a context vault implemented on the server appliance.

15. (NEW) The method of claim 12, wherein performing the act pertaining to context management comprises performing processing functions, in each of a context manager and a context vault, each of which is implemented on the server appliance.

16. (NEW) The method of claim 12, further comprising determining whether to use the server appliance or another, similarly-configured network appliance, based on load sharing considerations.

17. (NEW) The method of claim 12, wherein receiving and sending the network messages is done using the TCP/IP protocol.

18. (NEW) The method of claim 12, wherein receiving and sending the network messages is done using the HTTP protocol.

19. (NEW) The method of claim 12, further comprising adapting an existing server appliance for use as a context management server appliance.

20. (NEW) The method of claim 19, wherein adapting the existing server appliance comprises installing context management software onto the existing server appliance.

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21. (NEW) The method of claim 12, further comprising sending information, from a context client, to the server appliance, over the network.

22. (NEW) The method of claim 12, further comprising receiving information, from the server appliance, on a context client, over the network.

23. (NEW) The method of claim 12, wherein the context management action pertains to patient medical care.

24. (NEW) The method of claim 23, wherein the context management action pertaining to patient medical care comprises an action on a master patient index (MPI).

25. (NEW) The method of claim 23, wherein the context management action pertaining to patient medical care is in accordance with a healthcare industry standard.

26. (NEW) The method of claim 12, further comprising coupling the server appliance to a Web server, said Web server managing communication between the server appliance and other elements coupled to the network.

27. (NEW) The method of claim 26, further comprising running software on the Web server capable of supporting Web browser applications and an interface to client applications.

28. (NEW) The method of claim 12, wherein the network is any of: a wide area network, a local area network and the Internet.

29. (NEW) The method of claim 12, further comprising performing a coding act wherein context data is represented by corresponding numeric data.

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30. (NEW) A context management system, comprising: ---
a server appliance comprising:
a memory holding context management software
a network connection; and
a processor executing instructions corresponding to said context management software; and
a network, coupled to the server appliance via the network connection, said network carrying information pertaining to context management actions to and from the server appliance.

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31. (NEW) The context management system of claim 30, wherein the server appliance is a context management server appliance implemented on an existing server appliance.

32. (NEW) The context management system of claim 30, further comprising a load manager for distributing context management loads between a plurality of server appliances.

33. (NEW) The context management system of claim 30, wherein the network is any of: a wide area network, a local area network and the Internet.

34. (NEW) The context management system of claim 19, further comprising a Web server for managing communication between the server appliance and other elements coupled to the network

35. (NEW) The context management system of claim 34, further comprising software for supporting a Web browser and a client application interface.

36. (NEW) The context management system of claim 30, further comprising a master patient index (MPI).

37. (NEW) The context management system of claim 30, wherein the server appliance comprises a context manager.

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38. (NEW) The context management system of claim 30, wherein the server appliance comprises a context vault.

39. (NEW) A method for context management comprising exchanging context data, over a network, between a context management server coupled to the network and a plurality of client applications, installed on a corresponding plurality of computers.

40. (NEW) The method of claim 39, wherein exchanging the context data is performed using an Internet-based communication protocol.

41. (NEW) The method of claim 39, further comprising representing the context data with coded values.

42. (NEW) A context management system comprising a server having context management software stored thereon, said server communicating over a network with a plurality of client applications, said client applications residing on a corresponding plurality of computers, coupled to said network, and interacting with said context management software by exchanging data over said network.

43. (NEW) The system of claim 42, wherein the server further comprises Web server software

44. (NEW) The system of claim 42, further comprising a context vault coupled to the server.